REMARKS

As required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.121, Applicants hereby submit a corrected copy of the non-compliant Amendment previously filed on April 21, 2006. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner consider this Amendment.

Applicants respectfully submit that the Amendment filed on August 11, 2006 was a compliant amendment. Nevertheless, Applicants have provided more detail regarding the arguments related to claim 18, as required by the Examiner.

Claims 1-3, 6-12, and 15-16 have been amended. Claims 4, 5, and 13-14 have been cancelled. New claims 17 and 18 have been added. Claims 1-3, 6-12, and 15-18 are currently pending in the application.

On page 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner objected to claims 1-4, 6, 8, 11-13, and 15-16 due to various informalities. The objections are moot with respect to the cancelled claims. Applicants have amended the other claims to address the objections. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

On page 3 of the Office Action, claims 1-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention.

Applicants have amended the relevant claims to address the rejections. Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested. Regarding the Examiner's allegation relating to lack of antecedent basis in claim 14, Applicants respectfully submit that both terms are introduced in claim 11, from which claim 14 indirectly depends.

In light of the foregoing, withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

On page 5 of the Office Action, claims 1-4, 6-13, and 15-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,525,747 (Bezos).

Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 1-2, 6-11, and 15-16 are patentable over Bezos, as the reference fails to disclose each and every element of the claims.

For example, the reference fails to disclose, ". . . preference data including positional information of the symbol to be displayed on the user terminal," as recited in claims 1, 6, 7, 10, 11, 15, and 16.

Although Bezos discloses information pertaining to an item, no information is disclosed regarding positional information of a symbol to be displayed on a user terminal.

Therefore, independent claims 1, 6, 7, 10, 11, 15, and 16 are patentable over Bezos, as Bezos fails to teach each and every element of the claims. As dependent claims 12-13 depend from independent claim 11, the dependent claims are patentable over Bezos for at least the reasons presented above for the independent claims.

Regarding independent claims 2, 8, and 9, Bezos does not disclose, "a correspondence table in which identifiers for virtual spaces, identifiers for symbols, and levels of similarity in preference of users towards the symbols are correlated." Assuming *arguendo* that Bezos's URL identifies a virtual space, Bezos does not disclose a correspondence table in which the "identifier" is correlated with the information identified in the claim language of the present invention.

Therefore, independent claims 2, 8, and 9 are patentable over Bezos, as Bezos fails to disclose the above-identified feature of the claims. As dependent claims 3-5 depend from independent claim 2, the dependent claims are patentable over Bezos for at least the reasons presented above for the independent claims.

On page 9 of the Office Action, claims 5 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bezos in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,714,975 (Aggarwal).

Aggarwal discloses a method for displaying an object such as an advertisement, for example, at an appropriate position and for determining the position based on a user's behavior. Assuming *arguendo* that the user's behavior can be considered as "preference data" and that position of the icon is determined based on the "preference data," Aggarwal does not disclose a feature according to which the preference data includes positional information itself. Rather, Aggarwal discloses "user click/exposure ratios and user path traversal patterns," as examples of user behavior. *See* Aggarwal, column 3, lines 25-29. Aggarwal also discloses as user behavior access by a domain, for example, ".edu," or by clients in a certain area. *See* Aggarwal, column 3, lines 29-34.

In light of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that neither Bezos nor Aggarwal, taken alone or in combination, teaches or suggests, the feature of the present invention relating

to positional information, as recited in claims 5 and 14 via independent claims 2 and 11, respectively. Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 17 is patentable over Bezos in view of Aggarwal, as neither Bezos nor Aggarwal, teaches or suggests, "reading out a virtual-space identifier that corresponds to the symbol identifier from the correspondence table and reporting to the first user terminal and the second user terminal by the intermediating terminal."

Neither reference nor the combination of references provides or suggests information pertaining to a virtual-space identifier.

Similarly, claim 18 is patentable over the references, as neither reference, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests, "connecting an electronic device to said virtual chat space based on said virtual chat space identifier to allow communication regarding the merchandise," as recited in claim 18. Although Bezos references identifiers, the identifiers are not virtual chat space identifiers.

Bezos clearly indicates that its discussion system is an email-based discussion system, not a chat system, as identified in claim 18. *See* Bezos, column 7, lines 5-31. Applicants respectfully submit that an email-based system does not include a virtual chat space, as such a system does not involve "chatting." Rather, an email-system simply involves exchanging messages. As an email-based system does not include a virtual chat space, such a system does not have a virtual chat space identifier.

Bezos further clearly indicates that each entry in the discussion table contains a discussion identifier, that is, a "discussion ID." In contrast to the present invention's virtual-space identifier, Bezos discussion ID simply identifies a particular discussion to be "discussed," that is, a topic, via its electronic mail system and is, therefore, not a virtual chat space identifier. The users then respond to messages from the system. The identification of a topic or discussion and the identification of a virtual chat space are two completely different operations, at least for the reasons presented above.

Moreover, Bezos does not connect an electronic device to a virtual chat space, as the discussion system of Bezos is not a chat-based system; it is an email-based system.

As the slots of Aggarwal do not include virtual chat space identifiers, Aggarwal adds nothing of relevance to Bezos. Therefore, claim 18 is patentable over the references.

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY LLP

Date: 6-12-07
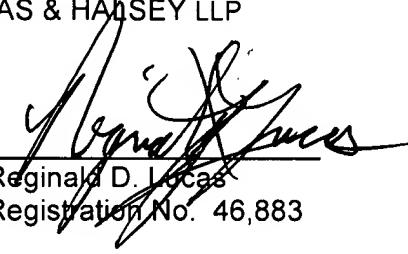
By: _____
Reginald D. Lucas
Registration No. 46,883

1201 New York Avenue, NW, 7th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 434-1500
Facsimile: (202) 434-1501